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THE FUTURE OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

SHOULD the Education Act fulfil half the hopes entertained of its success, no class of schools will be so materially affected as Sunday Schools. Sunday Schools, as they now exist, must be looked upon as necessary evils, and only to be tolerated on the plea of doing evil that good may come. Their very origin, though well and kindly meant, was subterfugical. The education of the children of the labouring classes had been systematically neglected. All week, from morn till night, the greatest possible amount of labour had been wrung out of the children, so that no time, and no opportunity was left for either play or recreation. In fact, when Sunday Schools were first started to educate the working classes they were thought to be a mistake altogether, and an error against sound political economy. The godly practice of catechising the children in church on Sunday afternoons had become and still remains a dead letter, and so, seeing the God-and-man-forgotten state the children, big and small, of the people had fallen into, a pious soul—Robert Raikes of Bristol—opened a Sunday School. His example was speedily followed by others, until at last the Sunday School became an established fact and a *sine qua non* of every religious body in the land. Doubtless on the surface such a consummation seems one devoutly to be wished for, but on examination its beauty will be found to be only skin deep.

The first objection to Sunday Schools as a means of educating the children of the poor is a strong one. If it is right and expedient to educate these children, it is not right or expedient to educate them on their only day of rest and relaxation. Children who have been bodily hard at work during six days, are not in a fit state to be put to mental toil on the seventh. Then, again, in not a few Sunday Schools this mental toil is not unaccompanied by physical punishment. Boxes on the ears and raps on the knuckles may seem slight matters, but little brains are very sensitive, and little fingers very tender. Moreover, no matter how mulish or obstinate the child, lessons of love should be taught on the Lord's day. Some may urge that education is not the primary object of a Sunday School, but the teaching of godliness and the subjection to good influences. Now, godliness is not to be taught, but is intuitive, and only requires cultivation; and by making the Bible a task book is the surest way to make it an object of dislike and irreverence.

As we said at the beginning, the National Education Act, if successful, will leave the present Sunday School system without the pretence of a *raison d'etre*. All excuses as to teaching to read on the Sundays will be entirely swept away, and if they are to continue to exist they must entirely re-model themselves. Sunday Schools in which the finest feelings of children may be cultivated will be wanted, and there is no reason why the Established Church should not revert to its afternoons for children at church, so musically modified as to keep pace with the times; but there will be no excuse for the weary afternoons at present imposed on poor children.

If the Church of England would only revise her children's services, they would become greatly and widely popular; and the clergymen at the chancel steps, with his black board and his coloured diagrams, assisted by the mellow notes of the organ, would awaken strains and impulses in our children which would go much further towards fitting them to do their duty in that state of life &c., than being compelled to sit through a long weary unintelligible morning service, followed by an equally uncongenial afternoon's dose of school, as is at present the case. "Milk for babes" is a frequent text. When will our spiritual pastors and masters be wise enough to provide it pure and unadulterated?

[LANCASHIRE WORTHIES.]

FELICIA HEMANS.

GERMANY and Ireland, Venice and Lancashire, contributed, all four of them, something to the being of this interesting and gifted woman, and it might amuse a fanciful critic to discover in her poetry traces of the influence of regions so different. Her father, Mr. Browne, a Liverpool merchant of some eminence, was of an Irish family in which the Celtic element had been doubtless interfused with the original Saxon, to which his surname testifies. Her mother, who had borne before marriage the unmistakably German name of Wagner was "of mingled Italian and German descent," and "daughter of the Imperial and Tuscan Consul at Liverpool" by a wife whose maiden name was Haddock, "a good and ancient one among the yeomanry of Lancashire."

Felicia Dorothea Browne, afterwards Hemans, was born on the 25th of September, 1793, in Duke Street, Liverpool, but, as through one of her grandmothers she inherited Lancashire blood, her connection with our county does not altogether arise from the circumstance that the great city on the Mersey was her birth-place. Little more is recorded of the father than that, like Dogberry, he "had losses," in consequence of which he broke up his establishment in Liverpool when Felicia was a mere child, and removed himself and his family to Gwrych, on the Denbighshire coast. As you whirl along towards Holyhead, a mile past Abergele Station, the scene of a railway accident famous in our time, you see on the left what the guide books call "a prominent object," an enormous modern "castellated edifice," displaying a very indifferent taste in architecture. This is "Gwrych Castle," near which, in the olden times, was fought various fierce battles between English kings and Welsh princes, and on its site stood the more modest mansion in which, about the beginning of the present century, Mr. Browne, of Liverpool, took refuge with his wife and family when fallen from his pristine estate. Ultimately, we are told, he "again engaged in mercantile pursuits," went out to Quebec, and there died. His wife was a superior and accomplished, though simple-minded, woman, to whom Felicia was passionately attached. Mrs. Hemans was the fifth of seven children, but she soon became by death the eldest daughter, and her mother did her best to educate her at home. She was never sent to school, but there were plenty of old-fashioned books at Gwrych, while behind her were the mountains and before her was the sea. She delighted in Shakespere at six, reading him in "a secret haunt of her own—a seat amongst the branches of an old apple tree." At eleven she was taken to London by her father and mother, a visit repeated in the following year, and she never saw the great metropolis again. Among the earliest of her rhymes are some verses written from London to one of her brothers. The child-poetess and early lover of nature, expresses in them her longing to return to her dear Welsh home, "and wander through the well-known vale," or "view the ships that swiftly glide," hand in hand again with her beloved brother.

She was a child of remarkable beauty as well as precocity, and of course her family and friends were very proud of her. At the ripe age of 14 they were foolish enough to collect some of the verses which she was always throwing off, and print them in a quarto volume! Her earliest adventure in print was also, perhaps, happily her most unsuccessful one. An ill-natured critic laughed at the quarto, and she felt the ridicule bitterly, at least "for a few days," after which, with the irrepressibility of true authorship, she began to rhyme again as flowingly as ever, and four years afterwards she appeared in print a second time with *The Domestic Affections and other Poems*, a volume of much less pretentious dimensions than its predecessor. Meanwhile, new objects and interests were engaging and engrossing her young heart and soul. Two of her elder brothers were in the Welsh Fusiliers. One of them was fighting in Spain, under Sir John Moore, and the imaginative girl became enthusiastic for the deliverance of Spain by British valour. She wrote a poem on "England and Spain," and it was at the height of her enthusiasm in this cause that her dreams became, as she fancied, embodied in flesh and blood. There arrived on a visit in the neighbourhood a Captain Hemans, presumably young, handsome, and intelligent, and an officer in the 4th, or King's Own Regiment. He was introduced to the family at Gwrych, and to the young poetess, "then in the full glow of that radiant beauty, which was destined to fade so early." "The

mantling bloom of her cheeks was shaded by a profusion of natural ringlets, of a rich golden brown, and the ever-varying expression of her brilliant eyes gave a changeful play to her countenance, which would have made it impossible for any painter to do justice to it." Captain Hemans of the 4th did ample justice to it. He fell in love with it and with her. The love was returned by the ardent girl of fifteen—all the more warmly that she did not see much of him, as he was soon ordered to proceed with his regiment to Spain, a destination which gave him an additional interest in the eyes of the romantic Felicia. Friends on both sides shook their heads, and hoped that the young people would forget each other, as the match was not recommended by what are called "prudential considerations;" but their hopes were disappointed.

Soon after the fascinating warrior's departure, and with or without the company of paterfamilias, the date of whose migration to Canada is shrouded in a certain obscurity, the Browne family removed from Gwrych to Bronwylfa, near St. Asaph, in Flintshire. Here, with her Peninsular enthusiasm still strong upon her, Felicia learned Spanish and Portuguese, sketched and played upon harp and piano, nourished her love of the romantic past when on excursions to Conway Castle, and wrote an abundance of verses, serious and gay, some of which were published in the volume of *Domestic Affections*. Those were happy days, but not precursors to the still happier which she fancied to be in store for her, when, within two years from the removal to Bronwylfa, and nearly three after they had fallen in love, Captain Hemans reappeared upon the scene. He was, or seemed, more interesting than ever, for he had been in the retreat from Corunna, and made one of the disastrous expedition to Walcheren. The young people were as ever fond of each other, and they were married in the summer of 1812. The Captain took his lovely young bride to Daventry, where he had to do duty as adjutant to the Northamptonshire Militia. The change from mountainous Wales to the tame country in which Daventry lies was a sad one for the young bride and poetess. However, there was Fawsley Park to enrich her mind and memory with the images of a noble old English domain; and she had not to remain long at Daventry. In a twelvemonth's time, after the birth of a first son, the Northamptonshire Militia was "reduced" or disbanded, and Captain Hemans ceased to be its adjutant. The young wife was naturally anxious to return to her beloved Wales and her still more beloved mother. The Captain did not object, probably because he knew not what else to do with himself, or where else to go. The retreat from Corunna and the expedition to Walcheren are charitably said to have enfeebled his constitution; and the young couple were soon domiciled at Bronwylfa, clearly without the society of Mr. Browne, senior, who was by that time again engaged in mercantile pursuits at Quebec, and who appears no more upon the stage.

For five years this state of things remained unaltered. Four more children, all of them sons, were born to the Hemanses, under the roof of Mrs. Broane, near Bronwylfa. Mrs. Hemans read, studied, and wrote as diligently as ever. At this time, her tendency was to classical or quasi-classical themes, and her "Modern Greece" was pronounced by Byron to be "a good poem, very." Who can tell but that it may, in some slight way, have influenced his final choice of a career? But now an event occurred which saddened her for life, so far as anything could sadden one who was by nature full of vivacity, as well as of ardour and enthusiasm. Captain Hemans' health was not good, and he resolved to try the effects of a southern climate. He left Bronwylfa for Rome, and he never returned from Rome to Bronwylfa, or to England; in fact, he never saw his wife again. Friends said that the education of the children, and the "literary pursuits" of their mother, made it desirable that she should remain in England. There were, it is well known, however, other reasons for the separation, but they have never been stated, and can only be inferred. The pair communicated with each other respecting the education of their sons, the two eldest of whom once paid their father a visit, but the burden of educating and supporting them seems to have been left to the disenchanted poetess at Bronwylfa. She grappled with her task like a heroic woman, but it was a difficult one, and its severity bore heavily upon her, just as the circumstances under which it was imposed clouded more or less the remainder of her life. From classical themes she turned to religious, and wrote *The Sceptic*, with the occasional counsel of her friend and neighbour, the kind old Bishop of St. Asaph. It was to her pen that she had to look for the performance of her maternal duty, and while *The Sceptic* was being composed, she competed, successfully, for a prize of £50 offered by a patriotic Scot for the best poem on "The Meeting of Wallace and Bruce on the banks of the Carron." Soon afterwards she made the acquaintance and gained the friendship of the good Reginald Heber, who sometimes visited his father-in-law, the Dean of St. Asaph. He encouraged her in the grave design of writing a poem on "Superstition and Revelation," which was to pourtray the workings of all the religions of the world, and contrast them with Christianity. A *magnum opus* of this or some other kind remained to the end of her days an object of Mrs. Hemans' ambition; but there were five Boys to bring up and to educate, and elaborate poems would do less for this object than popular verses and the composition of successful tragedies. It was a happy day for her when, in 1821, she received the announcement that the Royal Society of Literature had assigned her the prize for a poem on Dartmoor. All the happier that, when the joyful news reached Bronwylfa, her son Arthur sprang up from his Latin exercise and shouted aloud "Now I am sure mamma is a better poet than Lord Byron!" She was less successful with her tragedy the *Vespers of Palermo*, which failed at Covent Garden in 1823, and of which high hopes had been entertained in the little circle near St. Asaph's. But the name of Felicia Hemans was becoming known; and though the tragedy failed, John Murray had agreed to give two hundred guineas for the copyright. Removing, in 1825, from Bronwylfa to Rhyllen (only a quarter of a mile distant) she had scarcely settled in her new home when she received the pleasant tidings from beyond the Atlantic that a complete edition of her works was asked for in the States, where her vague imaginativeness was prized much more widely than in England, and every newspaper delighted to reprint her last magazine verses.

But another great blow soon befel her. In 1826, came the death of her mother, with whom she altogether and her children mostly had lived since the separation from her husband, and who had relieved her of much domestic care, and who had given her, when she was scarcely qualified to make for herself a happy home, or at least a home as happy as it could be under the circumstances. After this loss, her health, which had long been delicate, suffered greatly from her neglect of precautions which her mother had insisted on, and her struggle became more trying than ever. Fortunately her fits of depression, whether caused by melancholy or ill-health, were always broken by periods of buoyancy and of high spirits which nothing could extinguish. Even sorrow and sadness, too, could be transmuted into poetry, and at the very worst she was solaced by a piety fervid though unpretending. Not long after her mother's death, partly for the sake of the education of her sons, and partly for that of the society of some dear friends, she removed from her beloved Wales to Wavertree, near Liverpool. The change did not prove an agreeable one. The people of Wavertree stared at her as a curiosity, or pestered her with compliments, and were surprised when "the celebrated poetess" insisted on talking like anybody else about common things, and declined to do her part of an ordinary conversation in metre or high-flown prose. From Wavertree, she was happy to escape on two flying and delightful visits to Scotland and the Lakes. To Scotland she went (in 1829) as the guest of the author of *Cyril Thornton*, and under his roof she was the neighbour of Sir Walter Scott, who took to her at once, as she did to "the dear old gentleman." In Edinburgh she found herself a lioness, welcomed by the Man of Feeling, by Mrs. Grant of Laggan, and most cordially by Jeffrey. Scarcely had she returned to Wavertree when the *Edinburgh Review* appeared, with a graceful and most laudatory article on her poetry from the pen of the arch-critic himself. After launching (in the summer of 1830) her *Songs of the Affections*, she carried out an old wish to visit Wordsworth, who appreciated her as highly as did his enemy Jeffrey, and there were then few poets or poetesses of whom that could be said. It was clear that Mrs. Hemans was never to settle at Wavertree, a place which she found disappointing and unsatisfactory, even as regarded the education of her boys. At one time she thought of removing permanently to Edinburgh, but her physicians declared that a year in the grey metropolis of the North would be death to her. A visit to Ireland, where she had kind friends, and where her brother occupied an official post, decided her in favour of Dublin, and there, in 1831, she settled for the last time on this side the grave. Her health was breaking fast, and few could have recognised

in the worn and wasted woman, not yet forty, the lovely Felicia of Gwrych. Yet she wrote on—on—little volume after volume appeared from her pen, her very sufferings furnishing raw material for a series of sonnets, *Thoughts During Sickness*. The education of her son Charles was superintended under her own eye, and the future of his brothers sedulously cared for. What kindness could do for her was done, and every friendly attention was paid her by Archbishop Whately and his wife, who placed their country seat at her disposal. As her end approached, the serenity which marked her later years was disturbed by anxiety respecting the career of her son Henry, whom she had educated at Shrewsbury, and who was ready for the battle of life. Unknown to Mrs. Hemans, a steadfast lady friend exerted herself in high quarters, and Sir Robert Peel was premier. One day, to the suffering mother's surprise and delight, arrived a letter from Sir Robert, "appointing her son to a clerkship in the Admiralty, and accompanied by a most munificent donation, which, emanating from such a quarter, could create no feelings but those of heart-felt thankfulness, unmingled with any alloy of false delicacy or mistaken pride." It is her sister who says this. Mrs. Hemans did not long survive the reception of Sir Robert's bounty, dying in her lodgings at Dublin, on the 16th of May, 1835. She was buried in St. Ann's Church of the city of her death, and there is a memorial tablet erected to her in the Cathedral of St. Asaph.

Her poetry has too little thought in it for the new generation, which would be surprised if it knew the depth and extent of the influence exerted in her own day by Felicia Hemans. But the slightest inspection of her works reveals singular grace and tenderness, a faultless taste, a great variety of music, and an ardent sympathy with whatever is noble, heroic, and holy in man, or beautiful and expressive in nature. Her struggle in life would have been a hard one for a prosaic or strong-minded "woman of business;" it was still harder for a sensitive and suffering poetess. But she never flinched from the performance of her duty; she never repined; and her sorrows were breathed out in song to charm her readers, not to harass her friends. She could be, and often was, cheerful, animated, and even gay. Of one fault, said to be peculiarly feminine, Felicia Hemans seems to have been entirely devoid. There is not anywhere in her works and correspondence the slightest trace of vanity. She must have been no ordinary woman who won the admiration and friendship of men so dissimilar as Heber and Whately, Scott and Wilson, Wordsworth and Jeffrey.

THE ANGLER IN NORTH WALES.

2.—AT AND NEAR BEDDGELERT.

DURING the week spent at Capel Curig we worked with an energy at least equal to the sum of three tranquil Waltons rolled into one, and throve accordingly. Now we fished the upper, now the lower, lake; then Llyn Ogwen came into favour, and, as the brawling tributary at the back of the cottage was often in order, we followed more than once its wild wanderings amongst the hills. With a lingering look we passed when the summit of the road was gained to look back at a spot where we had been so happy. Hope, however, is a charming companion, and whispered in our ear that new fields for pleasant toil awaited us far down the valley, so, leaving the loveliness of Llanberris to the right, we walked lightly along the winding path immediately under the northern precipices of Snowdon, on our way towards Beddgelert. But we had no intention of losing the day, and had appointed an ancient professional, whose virtues on land and whose skill on water we knew and appreciated, to meet us at the western end of Llyn-y-Ddinas.

Though hundreds of tourists pass annually by Gelert's grave, few know anything of the sport to be found in the neighbourhood. In the season, when these summer birds flit lightly over the land, two small streams, murmuring faintly amongst the boulders, may be seen to unite near the forge. Under the blaze of a July sun they look, we are bound to confess, as unpromising as need be. But they are not always thus, for in ordinary spring weather they are merry rivers, romping gaily with the grey old stones, whilst the sound of their laughter as they hasten along may be heard from afar. The angling, however, is not confined to these waters, but is as varied as it well can be; so varied indeed, that the entire system may well excuse description. The sportsman who in March, April, or May, follows either of the streams mentioned, will, under favourable conditions, pick up a fair basket of stout little trout. Then the lakes are always open to him, be the weather what it may.

We must, however, go a little more into detail. Connected with the eastern branch of the Beddgelert river are Llyn-y-Ddinas, Llyn Gwynant, and Llyn Llydaw. May is probably the best month, but April is good, whilst the first half of June is far from being bad. On lakes Gwynant and Ddinas three dozen may be considered a good day's sport, though far more have been taken. Three miles east of the former, lies Llyn Edno, a capital tarn, where the fish average nearly one pound. Excellent boats are kept for the use of anglers on the lower lakes in the Valley of Waters, but for more remote waters a coracle must be carried by the guide. Bank fishing generally ends in disappointment. Doubtless the inventor of that primitive kind of bark, the coracle, could swim like a fish, nor is such an accomplishment unnecessary to the adventurous stranger who trusts himself on board a craft so frail. We cannot say we ever felt quite at ease in these "basket carriages," which are hard to get into, easy to fall out of, and uncommonly difficult to drive. Nineteen novices out of twenty might induce one of the machines to spin round and round like a top, whilst the twentieth would be sorely puzzled to make his ship waddle half-a-dozen yards in any required direction.

Three miles from the village, on the Carnarvon Road, lies Llyn-y-Gadir, the head waters of the western stream. This lake, from its exposed situation, often affords sport when there is not a ripple to be found elsewhere. The trout are small, but so numerous that six or seven dozen may be killed by a single rod in a good day. It is unnecessary to describe the flies in use, for two reasons: first, it is difficult to tie an exact copy from any description however minute and exact, and next, the insect on the water at the time can always be obtained at every station at a very low figure. It may be advisable, however, to say a word or two about the class of rod most suitable for the Welsh lakes. A light pliant weapon of fifteen or sixteen feet will answer as well for boat fishing as for the great majority of the rivers. Personally, we abominate single-handed rods, knowing them to be more fatiguing and infinitely less effective than those which require the combined action of the muscles of both arms. Such an article as that of which we speak will deliver with ease eighteen or twenty yards of line, and with the minimum of force will enable the angler, through the longest day, to cast with far less fatigue than would be necessitated by the employment of a shorter rod.

There is something irresistably charming in lingering, even on paper, over the beautiful tarns and bright streams that constitute the system round Beddgelert. But what is this to the sweet reality of wandering along the road which runs through the Valley of Waters. On the right frowns the stern magnificence of Snowdon, where cliff, gully, watercourse, and splintered rock are grouped into every shape and shade of beauty. Nor is music, sweet and harmonious, wanting. The voice of many waters sounds in our ears; the winds are chaunting their mountain song, whilst the querulous cry of the kite, as she wheels and circles high in the air, seems more in harmony with the scene than the whistle of the blackbird that rises from yonder clump of brush. We felt sorely tempted to forget the appointment made with our professional friend, and were more than once on the point of scrambling down into the glen whenever a pool of more than common promise came in sight. Honour, and perhaps interest, forbade, so we hurried on towards the place of meeting, ever and anon pausing to admire beauties that even North Wales can scarcely match. At length the bright expanse of Llyn-y-Ddinas came into view, and at its western edge sat our old comrade, his boat beached on the grey and shining gravel, looking wearily up the hill for his tardy employer. Short and hearty were our greetings whilst the line was slipped through the rings; then dexterous fingers looped on the long and fine casting line, and as the boat glided into deeper water the flies dropped on the surface. "Did you see him, sir; he wasn't a bad one," observed our companion, whose eyes, as he worked the sculls, appeared fixed on the bottom boards. Unfortunately we not only saw but felt him, and gave the stranger so rough a reception that the *loca bondu*—we spell the word with desperate recklessness—remained in his jaw to our infinite shame. Punishment often produces reformation; the next applicant met with a milder reception, and was soon landed, *secundem artem*, with that swift but steady sweep of the net so essential to a masterly use of the implement. Then one refused the fly, and another was pricked, and so, with varying fortunes, we drifted and

drifted till long after the sun had sunk behind the huts on the summit of the mountain. We wished in our souls that the yellow flood of glory that shone like a diadem on its grey peaks could have swept away excrescences more ugly and dirty than the kraals in a Hottentot village.

A sort of itinerant butcher, who sold us whilst at Capel Curig sundry quarters of what he called mountain mutton—they looked like *membra disjuncta* of a half-starved dog, but were nevertheless uncommonly odorous and appetizing about 7-30 p.m.—had engaged a lodging for us close to the western branch of the stream, following which we entered Beddgelert when the first stars were spangling the cloudless sky. An irregular line of cottages, scarce two hundred yards in length, constituted the entire hamlet. A few columns of faint blue smoke rose perpendicularly into the motionless air. A little knot of men lounged and chatted on the parapet that fenced the river from the road, whilst half-a-dozen curs barked and snarled at the heels of the English invader. There was one dog which must have been lineally descended from the redoubtable Gelert. Lean, with long sinewy limbs, and a row of teeth that would have done credit to a wolf, this determined animal hung on our rear—not exactly in the literal sense—and kept us in momentary fear for our legs. Of stones he took no heed, and it was not till after a long and doubtful combat, in which the handle of the landing net did admirable service, that we were able to continue our march up the street. Our friend, the itinerant butcher, rose high in our good opinion when we found our new quarters as clean and as sweet, as cheap and comfortable, as those we had left behind near the shores of the Mymbyr Lakes.

A crop of peace may be produced on any soil under the careful cultivation of religion and philosophy, but if the plant ever grows spontaneously, it does so at Beddgelert. What a delicious week we spent there! The first plunge into sweet mountain air produced all the invigorating effects of a bath; then the long days spent on the bosom of lakes, fairer than those seen by Martin in the *Plains of Air*; the frugal lunch under the shelter of some friendly rock; the never-failing enjoyment produced by the sight of the spoils placed alternately head and tail on the largest dish the cottage contained, were each a delight. It is impossible, however, to chronicle our doings at any length. Suffice it to say, we fished all day and every day, and that whilst our worst bag contained some fifteen trout, our best performance produced nearly four dozen fish, which, however, scarcely averaged four to the pound. But we were not cursed with ambition, nor did we sigh after the unattainable, for we knew that North Wales, at least in the spring, contains few elements calculated to produce great piscatorial triumphs. We sought health, happiness, and content, and found them to the full.

The last morning of our stay saw us at Gelert's grave. It was just the spot where the bones of a hero should repose. Five or six upright stones, evidently of high antiquity, marked the spot; and one stunted tree in particular, covered with inscriptions, grew between the fissures of the monumental slabs. Innumerable generations of Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons had there recorded their names and abodes. Men from every clime under heaven had left their autographs, which were written long-wise and cross-wise, with and without ornamental borderings, and of all sizes from the type of an ambitious poster to that of leader. Every inch of the trunk was covered with characters, and even the smaller branches had been rendered available for literary purposes. In fact the miserable tree seemed to do duty as a kind of tourists' album on which each pilgrim who came to worship at the shrine beneath left his mark. We once saw the celebrated Maori warrior, Tum-titti-titti, and a pretty specimen he was of the art of tatooing, but had that redoubtable chief stood with us by Gelert's grave the old trunk we have mentioned would have laughed him to scorn.

Parting from what we love is always a painful task, and now it seemed especially so. There sat patient John on the parapet of the wall that overlooked the stream, now casting a reproachful glance at our window, now dropping his fly into pool or eddy. Bacon and eggs, however, are not eternal, and coffee *will* get cold, so at last breakfast died a natural death, and we walked out of the village with lingering steps towards our next halting place, "The Snowdon Ranger."

MOTTO FOR SPINSTERS.—"Wait and Hope."

MOTTO FOR BACHELORS.—"Grin and—abide."

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

MR. TOOLE AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

MR. TOOLE is off with his old love, and fairly on with the new. After a connection with the Prince's Theatre, extending over many years, he commenced his £50 a night engagement at the Royal on Monday. The appearance of the house did not augur well for the pecuniary result of the manager's enterprise, for the attendance in circles and stalls was thin, and the pit was by no means crowded. Possibly this was partly due to the programme, the staple of which was a new piece, *Wait and Hope*, by Mr. H. J. Byron. We are disposed to think that Mr. Byron's native city has lately had a surfeit of H. J. Byronism. *Wait and Hope* is a domestic drama, with the British "self-made man" as hero, a spendthrift as foil, an attorney as the customary villain, and a young lady, cousin of the "self-made" man, as the heroine. The "self-made man," after making a fortune, loses it; the spendthrift is ruined out of revenge, and reinstalled in his estate by the avenger in a fit of remorse; banks break and wills or some other legal documents are discovered at most opportune but extremely improbable moments. There is nothing obviously unwholesome about the play, but there is nothing particularly good or attractive; and, in fact, *Wait and Hope* leaves upon the mind an impression much like the reading of a novel in the *London Journal*. It has a mawkish and slightly vulgar flavour, which the two or three bits of really decent work are powerless to relieve. Mr. Toole is the "self-made man," John Lockwood, a builder. There are excellent points about his performance. The scene, a difficult one, with the little child of six years old, is very true to nature, and, though quiet, powerful. But Mr. Toole is not a tragedian, and—apart from the unnaturalness of his revenge, for which the author is to blame—his assumption of a cruel and vindictive character is, in our opinion, a mistake and a failure. Mr. Toole is essentially a *farceur*, and we had rather be spared his attempts at pathos. Mr. Harry Taylor's portrait of Brindley, the butcher, and Mr. Pakenham's sketch of a poor clerk, were very good. Mr. E. Farren, who accompanies Mr. Toole, and who played the heroine, Alice Wainwright, possesses a hard, metallic, unsympathetic voice, and an amount of confidence which we have never seen equalled. Her sister, Miss Florence Farren, who had a small part in the afterpiece, impressed us much more favourably; she has great personal advantages, and, with experience, may become a decided acquisition to the stage.

LOSSES ON THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT.

Within the last fortnight, the Northern Circuit has lost two of its Queen's Counsel. The late Mr. Sowler, indeed, had been for some little time incapacitated by ill-health from actively attending to the work of his profession; and Mr. Davison had practically left the circuit upon his appointment as Judge-Advocate. This gentleman's removal is a very great loss; for his polished style could not but have exercised a wholesome influence upon the junior members of the bar.

DRAMATIC AND MUSICAL.

According to present arrangements we believe that there will be no opera company in Manchester this year, and that for the first time for many seasons, we must expect no visit from the Haymarket Company. We are promised, however, a visit from Miss Madge Robertson and Mr. Kendal, and Mrs. Rousby, it is rumoured, will shortly make her first appearance in Manchester at the Theatre Royal.

THE CRITICS AND MISS NEILSON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—Mr. Disraeli, in the House of Commons on Monday night, incidently brought the subtle accusation against Ministers and the editors of the Liberal papers in London, that they were "all personal friends." To leave Sidonia for Miss Neilson, the House of Commons for provincial theatres, and leading metropolitan papers for country journals, is a bit of a feat, but it can easily be done. The reputation which two or three London actors have gained has always been a dreadful puzzle to me: but the unqualified adulation of most provincial and one or two London critics, when "criticizing" her has proved a perfectly insoluble enigma. To read your

opinion of her, very ably and considerately expressed, was quite refreshing at the close of last week. Still—the enigma? I find critics of different complexions victims of an unholy emulation to out-Herod Herod in extravagant rhapsody. One in particular, whose barren periods and intolerable assurance have always been a source of much amusement to me, seems to have become an impersonified tailors' sandwich—not those made of ham, but those made of wood. He actually associates Miss Neilson with Helen Faucit! He struggles into a state of ecstasy as a drowning dog struggles into oblivion, and Miss Neilson's teeth, hair, husband, mouth, and gait form the sustentation of this grotesque literary *Amen* during his wild fever. Miss Neilson should ask her husband to save her from her friends. A lady with the capabilities to attain, as she undoubtedly has, a good and substantial position on the English stage, must feel that all this appalling puffery will eventually place her in a difficult position. When she is compared to Helen Faucit, people may expect merit something like Helen Faucit's, an expectation which might endanger Miss Neilson's genuine and honourable position.—Yours,

A. M. W. T.

THE TAX ON THE LUCIFER MATCHES.

BY A RETAIL MERCHANT.

AIR.—The King of the Cannibal Islands.

HURROO, fuzee boys, here's a go!
Oh, haven't we bothered Bobby Lowe?
And managed straight to let him know
Whatever plots he hatches
(As is the way of political quacks)
He's out with this Brummagem catchpenny Tax,
Which he wanted to saddle atop of the backs
Of the merchants of lucifer matches?
CHORUS.—Then strike up boys with main and might!
In honour of this auspicious night
When we put to bed, without a light,
The scandalous tax on matches.

Promiscuous-like we struck a blow
For Freedom, boys, and it happened so:
As to cob the nob of that snob Bob Lowe;
The tinkering cove who patches
Up schemes to grab what isn't his due
(As Exchequer Chancellors always do*)
And put poor people like us in a stew—
Merchants of lucifer matches.†
CHORUS.—Then strike, &c.

To Westminster, an injured throng,
'Twas our intent to march along,
But the bobbies they mustered ten thousand strong‡
To knock us over in batches:
Yet, though they spoiled our demonstration,
We roused the attention of the nation
To a sense of the awful situation
Of the merchants of lucifer matches.
CHORUS.—Then strike, &c.

He may tax the incomes of the nobs;
And all their other thingumbobs,
And so long as its only them as he robs
He's welcome to all he catches;§
But schemes like this his fate will clench;
And—like a soldier shot in a trench—
Will knock him over the treasury bench.
A Chancellor cooked with matches!
CHORUS.—Then down with political hacks and quacks!
Moreover also with this scandalous tax;
And whether they're made of wood or wax—
Hurroo for lucifer matches!

* What can a fuzee boy know about political economy?—*Printers' familiar.*
† Merchants! Oh!—*Ditto.*
‡ Is this poetical license, or is it a confounded lie?—*Ditto.*
§ As far as the fuzee boy is concerned!—*Ditto.*

OLDHAM

DURING THE LOCK-OUT.

IT is a pleasure, sometimes, to change one's mind. We have just had that pleasure, and are even now revelling, with all the enthusiasm of a convert, in our new-found sentiment. This is our position, that whereas we have in times past held Oldham in a disesteem, nearly amounting to disgust, we now consider it to be a pleasant, and even a festive town. Whenever a stern necessity has compelled us heretofore to visit the place, it has been during the ordinary working hours. The streets have been all but deserted; the shop-doors shut, as if a customer was the last thing to expect; and each shop-window was more uninteresting, if possible, than the last, except where a spidery youth was cleaning the windows outside, and exchanging winks with the cat inside; or, on the cat's side, there was a more or less young "person," with a kiel-buttery complexion, and features—well, "so thoroughly amiable, you know, dear," as the British matron of another circle says. The sky, too, was much the same colour, whether it rained or not, though it generally did, streaked occasionally with a darker strain of black smoke, which the engineer ought to be made to pay for, if, instead of consuming it, he chose to send it flying all abroad. By the way, did any one ever try an augury from the flight of smoke, after the ancient divining of the flight of birds, we wonder? or presage evil, or predict good, from seeing chimneys, like they do of magpies in odd or even numbers? We only saw two a-smoke as we looked the other day upon Oldham from that most melancholy of all melancholy stations, Middleton Junction. We thought the sight was ominous of bad luck for somebody, and we hadn't taken an insurance ticket!

Arrived at Werneth, we remained in our smoking compartment, and watched a portion of the population of Werneth exude on to the platform, and drift away into the outer, like the steam from the locomotive. We have always had some misgivings about Werneth—about the name, we mean. It is either meaningless, or odd and weird; one of Macbeth's witches might have named the place, or possibly, even lived there. Is it the third person singular of any verb—say, "to wern?" What does a man do when he werns, or werneth—doth wern? Do the unlearned say wasneth, by any chance? It is such a funny compound of tenses, too, plural in the head, and singular in the tail, a sort of corporation sole.

Oldham, it seems, is such a large place, that it requires three stations to get at it completely. Werneth we had passed, having chosen the Clegg Street, or Central Station, for our descent upon Oldham, so we there disembarked, and our train, having a little business at "Mumps," went on. Instead of a descent, however, it was an ascent which had to be made, and up several stages and flights (why flights?) of stairs we struggled, until we emerged into the upper air of Clegg Street. We rather like to dwell upon Clegg Street. It is the only street in Oldham of which we know the name, and it always reminds us of the clack-clock noise made on the flagged streets by the clog-wearing population of Oldham.

Clegg Street, a somewhat steep street, brings us at once into the heart of Oldham. There is the Town Hall when you get to the top, the old church in front, and public institutions all round, of such venerableness as is consistent with their existence in Oldham. Not but what there is some kind of ancientry about Oldham. Didn't the famous Hugh, Bishop of Exeter, of whom we in Manchester are never tired of hearing, come from Oldham?—stopping only on his way, perhaps, while the coach changed horses at the whilom Blackamoor's Head, by the Collegiate Church, to found the Grammar School.

But, though all these places were there on our former visits, they were in an entirely new setting. The main street was more

like Blackpool on a cheap trip day than anything we ever saw in Oldham before. Everybody seemed lively and chatty, and there wasn't a face that showed anything of the business-like, determined air, often joined to a somewhat sullen expression, that is so common, in ordinary times, with the working people of the district. It looked as if it was fair-time. And they weren't all the working classes—the "hands"—either. Notwithstanding that in Oldham, as in other outlying manufacturing towns, everybody who intends to preserve any kind of social standing, fulfils the great moral duty of coming to Manchester on a Tuesday, though he hasn't any business whatever to transact here, yet, on this last Tuesday, many such had either not gone, or had returned early, for there was a very fair attendance in the middle of the afternoon at the "Angel's" smoke-room, a place not much frequented by operatives.

The increased street population was, as our readers will perhaps have divined for themselves, caused by the strike, or, as it seems fashionable now to call it, the lock-out. As we were not particularly in search of such useful information as is supplied to, or by, the newspapers, we did not call at the head-quarters of either party—the masters' association, or the operatives' union. Each has its office, executive committee, with chairman and secretary, holds private meetings, issues circulars, and carries on business generally very much after the manner of a contested election. We preferred to mix with the crowd, and pick up the chance sayings, the thoughts uttered by the wayside, if there were any, when the people were away from the fascinating eye of the union secretary, or influenced by the spoutings of Messrs. the delegates—the professional agitators—who have the keen eye of the vulture for their prey. The market-house contained the usual inconsistent assemblage of cod-fish and confectionery, dolls and dandelion—everything, in short, from Bibles and butchers' meat to blacking-balls and butter, not forgetting godly books and gimlets. It was frequented chiefly in the toy department, where we saw several transactions take place in pocket-combs and dolls'-house furniture. There was a book-stall, too, far from ill-furnished, the astute proprietor of which was by no means ignorant of the value of his goods, and he had a way of looking at you, over his spectacles, that would make any but an experienced toiler in the sea of literature the easy captive of his bow and spear. Passing through this to the open market-place behind, we saw several small crowds. On enquiry, it did really turn out to be fair-time. There was a round wooden building, as yet shut up, which professed to be a circus. At the upper end were a few pens of young pigs, surrounded by an admiring crowd, and by way of introducing religion into common life, there was an open-air divine, mounted on a "cricket" close by, who tossed up and kept repeating a number of Scripture phrases with a dexterity similar to that of the mountebank, who keeps half a dozen glittering balls in the air at once, only the one performs for the gratification of his audience and the other for his own.

Some strangers and country folk no doubt formed part of the crowd about the market, but in the streets it was more distinctly and exclusively cotton. Among these, the lock-out was treated in a variety of ways. To some, the not-working was regarded as a relaxation, a stoppage of the constant strain and grind, and enjoyed as mere idleness on a fine afternoon is enjoyed by many. To others it was as an unexpected holiday, for which there had been no provision made, and in which none, in view of the uncertainty of the future, dare spend any money. Many seemed to think the strike was a matter over which they had no control. "The chaps at th' office had it a' their own road; they'd manage it somehow." But we met with several to whom the subject was thoroughly unwelcome.

"How long are you to be out?" we asked occasionally.

"If it lay wi' me," said an elderly man, who had worked for some time at the same mill, "it wouldna' last a day longer."

"Who has the say, then," we enquired.

"Oh, there's two on 'em walking about at thirty shillin' a week, and I reckon its them an' one or two other union seckitairies as does it."

Another feeling, shown rather than spoken, was, that the masters had got the best of the argument, through having conceded the one hour. Many of the "foreigners," the delegates from other quarters, seem to have felt this, and to have advised the natives to take the masters' offer; but the Oldham officials seemed disinclined to do so, either because the strike would collapse so soon, or that they were unwilling to turn round and try to unsay much that they had said, and, after all, not have their recommendation accepted.

By the time this meets the eyes of our readers, some arrangement may have been come to. What we saw looked more like playing at a strike than the real thing; but if masters and men cannot agree, and the war of labour against capital gets really to a crisis, Oldham will present a different spectacle than the one we witnessed on Wednesday last.

THE PROPHETIC BELL AND VERDANT GREEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—After the snubbing which you gave me last week on the subject of backing race-horses, you will doubtless be surprised at me turning up again with the same grievance. This time I cannot expect any sympathy from you, although I know that many are in circumstances similar to myself. Owing to the liberality of a friend, I was enabled to leave my temporary retreat, the Sponging House in Queer-street, at the end of last week. A sporting acquaintance assured me that I did not go the right way about making my investments according to the advice of the *Prophetic Bell*. He informed me that I ought to invest upon all the "good things" tipped by that oracle, and thus I should obtain a good average.

Following this advice, I spent another last shilling upon the *Prophetic Bell's Private Intelligence Circular*, which professes to give private "tips" by means of a key indicating the probable winners in the morning papers. By means of this valuable authority I was informed that the Belgrave Cup, at Chester, would be won by Green Ribband or the Clotilde Filly. It resulted in the success of Roma, so that I lost on that race. The Mostyn Stakes, according to *The Prophetic*, would be won by Toft or Sauntering Molly. The race was won by the Masquerade Filly. Another loss to your correspondent. Following my Prophetic guide, I laid 7 to 4 *on* Lord of the Valley, for the Eaton Plate. This horse won, but the odds of 7 to 4 on him were so ruinous, that I only netted a mere trifle. The Wynnstay Stakes were predicted to be won by Orleans, but Vintner carried them off, and the Vale Royal Stakes which were to have fallen, according to *The Prophetic*, to Costa, were won by Fricandeau. So much for Tuesday's racing, on which I lost heavily.

However I was assured that the Cup on Wednesday would recoup me, for all my losses. Accordingly I plunged heavily. On Monday, *The P. B.* advertised that either Not Out or Indian Ocean would win. On Wednesday he discarded Not Out, and declared for Lord Hawke and Indian Ocean, adding that Sunny was "very dangerous and a certain place investment." Well, Sir, I punted heavily on these horses. As I write, the race is just over, and I am once more off to Queer-street. Glenlivat, a horse which *The P. B.* did not even mention as likely to start, and about which I could have got 100 to 1 yesterday, was first. Mortemer, not recommended by the *The P. B.* was second, and Our Mary Ann was third. Out of a small field of only fifteen horses, not one of *The Prophetic Bell's* selected,—Lord Hawke, Indian Ocean, and Sunny—were in the first three, not to mention Not Out, the horse which was chosen on Monday and discarded to-day.

Now, Sir, am I to be told that if I had followed the tipster's advice, I should have won? The truth is that I followed it only too literally,

and lost every bet which I made on the Chester Cup, and yet *The Prophetic Bell* advertises in its own columns "that a single investment on one of Kettledrum's good things, will pay for the subscription for the paper all the year round." It is narrated of the late Mr. W. M. Thackeray, that when he had lost his patrimony, fortunately for the world, previous to his taking to literature for a profession, he met a friend in Fleet-street, and thrusting his hand dolefully into his breeches' pocket he pulled out a shilling. Remarking that this was the last one he had in the world, he exclaimed, let us go and spend it at the nearest tavern. Sir, should I ever possess a coin of similar value, I sincerely hope that I may meet yourself or some other congenial soul, and have the opportunity of investing in a pot of porter rather than in purchasing Private Intelligence Circulars published by *The Prophetic Bell*, or any other tipster whatever.—Yours respectfully, VERDANT GREEN.

Moslin Head Tavern, Chester, May 3rd.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—I quite sympathize with your correspondent, Verdant Green, who wrote you last week that he had pawned all his clothes as a *dernier resort*, in order to retrieve his battered fortunes by plunging on two tips of the *Prophetic Bell*. Verdant Green has been happy in his selection of a *nom de plume*, for as to any knowledge or judgment he possesses in backing horses he certainly is a double green. Now, as I have been a backer of horses for nearly twenty years, my opinion may possibly be as valuable as that of Verdant Green.

In the first place, then, permit me to state that, with very few exceptions, I do not believe in tipsters at all. As a rule, they are a pack of ignorant impostors, and do not know the hocks from the knees of a horse. I have tried them nearly all round, and the majority live upon the credulity of the public by guess-work. When I first commenced backing horses as an exciting pastime I believed in tipsters, but a reduced exchequer was the invariable result. The charlatans will never admit they have been wrong, and unblushingly advertize the most daring lies. The genuine tipsters are a little more modest in their assertions, and to a certain extent useful in guiding the judgment of the backer by informing him of horses in work, their market status, and the genuineness of the operations.

But no man should back horses with the idea of winning unless he has some knowledge of his own, which, to a certain extent, corresponds with the information of the tipster. Then he is justified in "putting it down," not with the intention of standing "pat" out, but of hedging his stake, however small, so that "he may sit upon velvet," and have something to nothing. This is the only lasting game, and it may not be out of place (as the *Prophetic Bell* has been attacked) for me to say that I consider that paper as reliable as any in drawing the attention of its subscribers to the chances of horses at "long shots." The editor appears to have reliable correspondents and excellent judgment in weighing up the "form of horses." I am a subscriber, and have profited by his information, though I was at first very reluctant to believe in it. For instance, he advised Veranda at 33 to 1, in consequence of which I took 100 to 3. The horse ran a dead heat with Vulcan for the Lincoln handicap, so the money had to be divided, and I got £51. 10s., or a clear profit of £49. 10s. for a risk of £3. He suggested Mortemer for Chester Cup, at 20 to 1. I took 100 to 5, and have now hedged 50 to 10; so if he wins, I shall get £50; if he loses, I shall win £5. I enclose a list of his deeds of last week, which I received, as every subscriber would receive, in due course, and you will see he does not claim to be infallible, and never wrong; he admits both sides:—

KETTLEDRUM'S SELECTIONS DURING THE PAST WEEK.

NEWMARKET MEETING.

Prince of Wales Stakes—Enfield (16 to 1)	Won.
Plate of 100 sovs.—Idus	Second.
Two Thousand Guineas—Bothwell (place)	Won.
Sweepstakes—Luisette	Second.
Prince of Wales Stakes—Nobleman	Walked over.
Experimental Handicap—Vulcan	Won.
Sweepstakes of 50 sovs.—Mortimer	Won.
Sweepstakes of 50 sovs.—Corisande	Walked over.
Handicap Plate—Capsule (20 to 1)	Won.
One Thousand—Steppe a place (5 to 1)	Second.
Plate of 50 sovs.—Old Sam (16 to 1)	Won.
Sweepstakes—Countryman	Won.
Sweepstakes—Dutch Skater	Walked over.

But, notwithstanding all this, I advise simpletons, rash men, or impatient men to avoid backing horses. Never risk what it would be inconvenient to lose. But to those who love a frisk, and can afford it, I say, pick out a good tipster and follow him alone, disregarding all the rest; he will be right at least once in an average of six events; therefore commence with a small stake, and gradually increase it (not doubling) up the sixth event; if all six events "come off crabs," commence the sequence again with a small stake, and if your guide does not spot a winner in twelve events, "turn him up," and never bet again. One win would save you, and probably leave a profit. Such is the plan of one who has only recently found out how to make it pay, and has been for twenty years A BACKER OF HORSES.

[FROM A NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK.]

THE BADGER.

WERE it necessary to apply a fanciful name to the subject of this paper, we might call him Jaques du Bois, though not a few points of difference may be found between the type and anti-type. The melancholy Jaques roamed the forest with sufficient society, though of a somewhat questionable sort; quaffed excellent liquor; eat the King's venison; snapped and snarled in season and out of season, and moralized in good set terms, though, like many another moralist, the personal application of his own philosophy seems to have been reduced to a minimum. But our Jaques is far more of a hermit, and infinitely less disagreeable than his namesake of the Forest of Arden. He lives in almost absolute solitude; partakes of indifferent fare; drinks of the spring, and never by word or deed wounds anybody except under great provocation or in self defence.

Badgers are sorely given to lying in bed. The habit is so inveterate that they uniformly turn day into night, and sleep at the bottom of their burrows from sunrise to sunset, when they get up, perform a hasty toilet, and commence business. These animals construct their castles somewhat after the mediæval pattern. They are generally built on high, inaccessible ground; are provided with winding passages and odd chambers, and terminate in a circular apartment, or keep, at the bottom well provisioned with dry grass and hay. They have, however, very modern ideas on the subject of sanitary regulations, for they remove everything of an offensive nature from their dwellings, and are even said to abandon them if polluted by any creature during their absence from home. The English species is about the weight of a good-sized dog, but stands much lower on its legs. No animal of its size, probably, has so thick a skin, the resisting power of which is further strengthened by the mass of hair that covers it.

Nature is an admirable *marchand des modes;* infinite in resource, happy in results, and adapting her costumes to each particular wearer with faultless felicity. It must be admitted, however, that she has dressed the badger somewhat out of the prevailing fashion. In almost all quadrupeds the darker shades meet over the spinal column, and become gradually lighter as they approach the inferior mesian line. In the badger this rule is partially reversed, the light colours occupying the shoulders, whilst the dark ones spread over the breast and abdomen. "Grey as a badger" has become a proverb, and their Quaker-like sobriety of apparel is produced by the blending of infinite shades of white, black, and ashy tints. We might paint him as he saunters through the woods, describe his air, gait, absence of affectation, and the like; but pen and ink sketches, however laboured and minute, seldom succeed in placing before the eyes of the reader a palpable likeness of the person or thing described. No artist likes to work in vain; so we will leave our picture unfinished, and turn to other matters in which we may reasonably hope to be more successful.

If the dental system were alone considered we should be justified in believing the badger almost a vegetarian. Experience, however, shows that such an opinion would be erroneous; for whilst fond of roots and fruits the animal has a sad partiality for eggs, ground game, young partridges, and pheasants, and, by way of dessert, never fails to eat honey when it can be obtained. Indeed, in the matter of robbing the nests of wild bees he is literally a hardened sinner, nor is nature altogether blameless in this matter; indeed she might almost be considered as an accessory before the fact, since it is evident she has fitted him out, regardless of expense, for this particular kind of burglary by bestow-

ing on him a hide proof against punishment. As the diet of this callous animal has been a vexed question, we make no apology for the following account of his appetite and tastes. "I have kept these animals"—says the writer from whom we quote—"in order to try what kind of food they preferred. At first I fed them on bread, milk, and raw potatoes, and found they cared little for either. Next I gave them a sheep's paunch, night and morning. This they evidently liked, never touching the potatoes which I continued to supply. When they became more tame, I tried them with a live magpie, which one of them killed and swallowed in an incredibly short time. Next I gave them a carrion crow and a rat, both alive, and these were instantly eaten. There seemed no end to the number of eggs they were able to suck. But fresh caught trout and eels were their special delight" It would be useless to narrate further experiments, and we may fairly conclude that, in confinement at least, the badger is omnivorous. But we must remember that the condition is anomalous; his occupation is gone; he is deprived of his accustomed pursuits, and the only pleasure left him is eating. We have heard of biped prisoners acting in much the same way from the same cause. Few conclusions are more erroneous than those drawn from wild animals placed suddenly in confinement. Their instincts and habits at once undergo a change; they are not what they were, and therefore do not represent those of free life. The carte, however, may be useful to any reader who may possess such a prisoner

Buffon gives a curious story of the mischievous tricks played by the fox at the expense of the badger. The following is our version of the great naturalist's text. Reynard, as an excavator and architect, is decidedly inferior to his woodland rival, and envies the result of his labour and skill. Lord Byron says, "Looking begets longing." The fox wants his neighbour's house and lands, and the more he inspects it the more he longs for it. As he dare not attack him *vi et armis*, he tries stratagem; sits at his door for hours together; solaces his watch by doleful howlings and short, discontented barks, and does many other irritating and nasty things. The poor badger, who prefers peace and cleanliness even to his possessions, at last gives way under a system of persecution he, no doubt, indignantly resents, but is unable to punish; and the crafty sentinel, having seen the rightful possessor fairly ejected, makes himself at home in another person's house without being much troubled by any unpleasant qualms of conscience. Our laws for the protection of game form rather a lengthy code, yet they must be obviously defective in the opinion of the badger, who, if what we hear is true, would be naturally anxious for the insertion of a clause making wilful annoyance penal. How would any reader of the *Sphinx* act and feel if an exasperating neighbour had, for the previous week or so, sat on *his* door step, singing "Rule Britannia," and dancing extemporized war dances?

Badgers are found in various parts of the world,—in America, in India, and nearly over the whole of Europe; but nowhere numerous. In the United Kingdom seldom more than one or two individuals are found even in the most extensive covers. The fact is they have few friends either in or out of Parliament. Their supposed poaching propensities have rendered them unpopular, and game preservers wage active warfare against them. Brushes, mats, and rugs, are made from their skins; when applied to these latter uses, we can speak positively as to their durability; but thereby hangs a tale.

Some years ago, whilst idling away half an hour in desultory reading, we lighted on the following passage:—"Badger hams are esteemed a luxury." One of the locks of a favourite double wanted easing, and an hour after the acquisition of the above valuable information we walked into a gunsmith's to have the defect remedied, where we found a friend's keeper who had come thither on a similar errand. Full of the subject, we asked whether he could procure a specimen of the race our soul longed for, and were informed that such a thing was probable, whereupon we covenanted to give half a guinea for his body, dead or alive. We waited, however, so long, that at last the subject was forgotten. Two or three months after the date of this fiendish compact the door of the study opened; our acquaintance, the keeper, walked in and laid a strong canvass bag under the table. With some vague idea of pheasants, we touched it with our foot. "Take care, sir, they bites awful, and this one is a regular savage."

The victim we had caused to be kidnapped had come at last, and uncommonly lively he was, as the rush made in the direction of our legs testified. He was soon killed and skinned, and as the household practically refused to demean themselves, we cured the joints with our own hands from a most approved receipt. They were smoked *secundum artem*, and duly suspended in the kitchen. At that time, contrary to custom, our appetite at breakfast failed signally, but recovered almost immediately after we remembered that age was absolutely necessary to develop the full perfection of a ham. We made a note on the subject, and determined to enjoy the delicacy about that day twelve months. When it appeared on the table, handsomely glazed and elaborately ornamented with pink and white paper, the murdered animal was fully avenged. With procrastinating politeness we did the honours. "Allow me the pleasure of giving you a slice. Badger's hams are a great delicacy. No? Nor you, nor you?" They would not deprive me of what had been so expressly procured for me. It was clear a conspiracy existed. With a strange fluttering in the gastric region, we cut a delicate shaving, and swallowed the abominable carrion. Observing, however, that glances of ill-concealed merriment were exchanged across the table, we manfully took a second portion, thinner even than the first, and pronounced it excellent.

"There is an end unto every pain," sang Barry Cornwall, and so we found it, for on the following morning it was reported, with hypocritical regret, that the cat had stolen my treasure. We trust the humane deceit may be forgiven. The other ham was presented to a particular friend as an immense favour. It was received with a dubious smile, and we more than suspect still hangs somewhere on the premises in a semi-fossilized state as a monument of the disinterested friendship of the donor.

A NOTE ABOUT TIMON OF ATHENS.

ON the production of *Timon of Athens* at the Prince's Theatre in March last, we remarked that "it is almost beyond question that it was never transferred from the book to the stage until the present century." A careful research into the annals of the stage prove that we were wrong, and it is perhaps as well that we should amend our record, which haply may not be without interest to our readers.

The first production of *Timon*, so far as we can discover, was in the autumn of 1678, at the Dorset Garden Theatre, when Betterton brought out an adaptation of the play by Tom Shadwell, then poet laureate, and it continued on the acting list as a stock piece until 1710. Timon was also played by Jack Powell, and the great Booth was Jack's Alcibiades. The next representation of Shadwell's version bears date, Drury Lane, May 1, 1733; the playbill informing us that it had not then been played for sixteen years. Timon was played by Milward, Quin taking the part of Apemantus, and Mrs. Hallam that of Evandra. It was also produced at the same theatre in 1740, with Mrs. Pritchard as Melissa; and at Covent Garden in 1745, Quin (the only actor named in the bill) playing Apemantus. Another version of Shakespere's play by Love, was brought out at the Richmond Theatre in 1768. Timon was played by Aikin, and Apemantus by Love himself. We have no particulars of this adaptation, except that it was thought at the time to be superior to Shadwell's. In Cumberland's version, which was brought out at Drury Lane, December 4, 1771, Evandra and Melissa are discarded, and a daughter of Timon (Evanthe) is introduced. Barry played Timon, with Bannister as Apemantus, Crofts as Alcibiades, and Mrs. Barry as Evanthe. It is not recorded that this version kept the stage.

Forty five years afterwards, when Edmund Kean was at the height of his glorious powers, an attempt was made to revive the original play. The task was committed into the hands of the Hon. George Lamb, who says in the preface: "My present endeavour has been to restore Shakespere to the stage with no other omission than such as the refinement of manners has rendered necessary." A contemporary critic observes: "This version does Lamb considerable credit, not only being infinitely superior to any of the former alterations, but as serving as a model of the manner in which Shakespere's plays should be adapted to the modern stage." The production of this revival bears date, Drury Lane, October 28, 1816, with the following cast: Timon, Kean; Apemantus, Bengough; Alcibiades, Wallack; Flavius, Holland; Lucius, Harley. It does not appear that Kean succeeded in making it a popular play. We believe we are correct in adding that Macready never attempted it, and that it was not again heard of until Mr. Phelps brought it out as one of his revivals at Sadler's Wells, its last representation there being in the autumn of 1851, to be followed after another quarter of a century by its production at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, by Mr. Charles Calvert, for his benefit, March 6th, 1871.

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